

State Dept. declassification & release instructions on file

To : IBS/TV - Mr. Frederick A. Long
From : IBS/T - Gerald F. Doohier
Subject: Iran TV

Date: April 3, 1957

1. Habib Sabet, a wealthy and influential Tehran merchant, has been given a franchise by the Iranian Council of Ministers for a commercial television station to be located in Tehran. Sabet is Iranian representative of RCA International, and he plans to install RCA equipment which will insure operation of the Tehran station on American standards.

2. Sabet has requested any and all possible U. S. Government assistance in order to get his station under way with intelligently planned and progressive programming. He is willing to set aside programming time for the following purposes:

- a) Ministry of Education programming
 - b) Ministry of War morale-building programming
 - c) USIA informational programming

Sabet states, and I have other evidence supporting his statement, that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Iranian Army, General Abdullah Hedayat; and the Minister of Court (and prospective Prime Minister) Dr. Manuchehr Eqbal are all enthusiastically supporting Sabet's TV project.

4. Sabet plans to purchase and install the basic transmitter and studio equipment necessary to get the station on the air. He is desirous, however, of obtaining assistance in the following fields so that he can achieve balance between educational, informational and entertainment programming, and between live studio and live remote programming.

a) Materiel

Sabet wishes to have made available to his station a mobile remote unit which could be used for live telecasting of sports events, military displays, economic development projects, and other special events which would contribute a balanced program.

b) Personnel

Sabet would be agreeable to place programming and technical direction of the station under American supervisors provided their salaries were absorbed outside the station's regular operating budget. He has made some preliminary contacts with the United Nations Technical Assistance Organization in an effort to have them provide the two specialists gratis.

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Council of Ministers
specifies standards

5. It appears to me that in line with our mandate to encourage the development of TV in the Middle East, we should attempt to assist Sabet to accomplish his worthwhile objective of getting his station off to a good start, particularly since he has shown such a willingness to adopt American programming and technical standards.

6. There seem to be a number of channels through which Sabet might work in order to explore the possibility of American Government aid for his project.

a) If he were to allocate one or two hours each day to educational programming as well as provide coverage of economic development projects, ICA might entertain the possibility of lending his station the two specialists he requires, especially if such assistance were requested by the Iranian Government.

b) The mobile equipment might possibly be loaned by MAAG, Tehran, or by USIA under the Agency's Military Motivation Program, in view of Sabet's declared intention to set aside for the Ministry of War time for morale-building programming.

7. I shall suggest to Sabet that he meet with Mr. Winfield of ICA and Colonel Williamson of the Department of Defense to explore these possibilities further.

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